

## STANDARDS FOR CONFIDENTIALITY, DISCLOSURE OF DATA, AND QUALITY ASSURANCE

### CONFIDENTIALITY

Data obtained under the *Texas Cancer Incidence Reporting Act* are for the confidential use of the Texas Department of State Health Services, including persons, public or private entities that are necessary to carry out the public health interests of the Act. The data are privileged and may not be divulged or made public in a manner that discloses the individual identity of any patient. All reporting entities that are performing in compliance with the Act are immune from civil and criminal liability for furnishing the required information.

### DISCLOSURE OF DATA

All data reported to the TCR are available for use in aggregate form for analysis by registry staff, cancer researchers, and the public. Reports of the incidence of cancer for the state can be generated. Public access to aggregate data is available through published reports, or through the TCR, if in accordance with its data release policies and procedures.

The TCR **may** exchange patient-specific data with the reporting facility, any other cancer-control agency, or clinical facility, pathology laboratories, physician's offices for the purpose of obtaining information necessary to complete the abstract or follow-up information, provided that these agencies and facilities comply with the TCR's confidentiality policies. However, no facility-specific patient information can be released unless authorized under law. The TCR can contact the facility where the patient was seen and obtain consent to release information other than that authorized by law.

To achieve complete case ascertainment, the TCR **may** exchange patient-specific data with other state cancer registries if reciprocal data sharing agreements and confidentiality provisions are implemented.

The TCR **may** grant researchers access to confidential information concerning individual cancer patients, provided that those researchers comply with the provisions and confidentiality policies mandated by the Texas Department of State Health Services Institutional Review Board.

### QUALITY ASSURANCE

The TCR implements an extensive series of quality assurance procedures that are based on the SEER Program, CDC recommendations and NAACCR standards. These procedures, which consist of both internal and external processes, ensure the reliability, completeness, consistency and comparability of TCR data.